


[Members](#), [Log In!](#) / [Create an account](#)

Uniting educators. Moving education forward.

[SEARCH WEAC](#)


Continue Your Membership for the 2012-13 School Year

As a WEAC member, you have the power of the collective. Through our union, we support each other, students and communities.



Member Benefits

- Professional and Skill Development
- Legal Assistance
- Reliable Communications Resources
- Financial Benefits and Discounts
- Leadership Development & Opportunity

News Headlines

[All news](#)

Wisconsin students losing out under revenue controls

Posted: 4/14/2009 10:12:22 AM

April 14, 2009

For more information, contact
Christina Brey, WEAC Media Relations Officer
608.298.2519

70% of Wisconsin schools increased class sizes last year, nearly 65% offered fewer courses, survey shows

Wisconsin's school funding system is forcing more school districts than ever before to severely cut programs and services just to stay afloat, an annual survey of school administrators reports.

The survey of 315 Wisconsin administrators shows that schoolchildren are losing out due to the compounding effects of revenue controls, enacted 16 years ago. An alarming trend continues as more districts are cutting academic offerings because other areas have already been reduced or eliminated.

This is the 15th year of the survey, which is conducted by the Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators and the Wisconsin Education Association Council.

Sixty-three percent of school districts last year reported offering fewer academic classes. Vocational and technical education offerings are diminishing, and 58 percent of superintendents said they will cut programs such as art, music and foreign language in the next three years.

Administrators reported having to cut and reduce programs crucial to student success. Nearly 70 percent of superintendents said class sizes increased last year, 59 percent reported reduced programs for gifted and talented students and 54 percent noted reduced programs for at-risk students.

Educators are very sensitive to today's economic slowdown, but note that school funding has been capped for 16 years. This has created a negative cumulative effect throughout the state (Table 1). The number of school districts reporting they offer fewer field trips for students jumped 62 percent last decade, and the number of districts that laid off teachers as a result of revenue controls increased 78 percent. Districts also are offering less professional development for teachers, laying off aides and support staff, and increasing teacher workloads at dramatic rates.

"For the first time in our proud history, Wisconsin is in danger of offering fewer opportunities to children. Previous generations built up our system of education, and we are now on the verge of dragging it down," said WEAC President Mary Bell. "We need a new funding system: one that is accountable and targets money where it's needed most in order to provide opportunities for all children."

The report notes that these cuts in education come despite significant measures taken by school districts to increase efficiency.

For the first time as part of the survey, superintendents were asked what business strategies they've adopted to reduce costs in their districts. Every school district has adopted new business practices to control and reduce costs. Ninety-nine percent took steps to reduce energy costs, and 94 percent changed health care for employees in response to shrinking resources.

In addition to reducing energy and health care costs, 86 percent of school districts across Wisconsin combined jobs and duties within their district, 87 percent used cooperative education services, and 65 percent participated in purchasing cooperatives for school supplies and energy.

The responses show that school districts are accountable for the tax dollars they receive, but even substantial efforts to control expenditures cannot completely offset the negative effect of revenue controls.

"Our schools have used innovation to cut expenses and consolidated resources in response to these tough economic times, but this alone is not working. We can't turn children away at the schoolhouse doors," said Miles Turner, executive director of WASDA. "The evidence is overwhelming. Schools are trying everything they can to live within the unrealistic confines of revenue controls, but Wisconsin's children

are still losing educational opportunities.”

WASDA and WEAC are members of the School Finance Network, which has proposed a plan to change the way Wisconsin funds its schools. The Wisconsin Assembly Education Committee has scheduled a hearing on the School Finance Network funding reform plan at the state Capitol on April 21.

[Read the report](#)

Editors Note: This annual survey is anonymous; therefore district-by-district details are not available. However, for help finding out how your local schools have been impacted by revenue controls, please contact Christina Brey, WEAC media relations officer, at 608.298.2519; breyca@weac.org.



Comments 1

1. **ted** 8/25/2009

The roads are falling apart due to road and fuel taxes going to education and nothing to the roads. Look at I90 from Janesville to Madison. Furthermore, money that doctors pay into for a malpractice fund was robbed by Gov. Jim Doyle for education. Three quarters of my property tax bill goes to the school. How much money does it take for a school to operate. If NH can operate a school system just on property taxes, which are the same here in WI then so can this state. New Hampshire has no income tax or sales tax yet we do. Maybe some of the highly paid administrators should hit the road.

Post a comment

[Read our Social Networking Guidelines](#)

1. Name
2. Email (*optional*):
3. Your URL (*optional*):
4. Comment:

[Formatting options](#)

5.

The content on this page is solely for members of the Wisconsin Education Association Council. By clicking below you are certifying that you are a member of WEAC.